BUILDING UPON OUR RICH HERITAGE

The National Security Agency was established on November 4, 1952, under a directive issued by President Harry Truman. The Central Security Service comprises the elements of the Armed Forces that perform signals intelligence and information assurance along with NSA. CSS was established under a presidential directive in 1972.

Yet, code making and code breaking have influenced America's history from the earliest days of the nation. General George Washington, leading the Continental Army in the Revolutionary War, is known as "America's First Spymaster," and the Culper Spy Ring used codes and other means to protect the information they were passing to Washington in support of his activities.

During the Civil War, both Union and Confederate soldiers sent encrypted messages and intercepted enemy communications. In 1917, British decryption of the Zimmerman Telegram helped push the United States into World War I.

Intelligence derived by solving Japanese and German systems gave Allied forces an edge in many World War II battles, arguably shortening the war and saving countless lives. Likewise, protecting U.S. communications was as important to the Allied victory in WWII as reading the enemy's messages. The Marine Corps and Army trained Native Americans in radio communications; they used their own languages and code words to confuse enemy soldiers who may have been listening. The Army and Navy also encrypted messages using the SIGABA, an extremely complex cipher machine that was never broken by the enemy.

The Cold War saw cryptology foster the development of new communications and computer technology. Today's supercomputers, wireless communications, data storage devices, and verification systems owe some of their development to NSA.

A UNIQUE NATIONAL ASSET

AMERICA'S CODE BREAKERS AND CODE MAKERS

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TODAY

our national leaders, policymakers, warfighters, law enforcement agencies and intelligence Community partners face some of the gravest national security challenges in U.S. history.

To respond to these threats to our nation, we need to understand our adversaries, their capabilities, and their plans and intentions. At the same time, we must protect our communications and information from those adversaries, and we must outmaneuver those adversaries in cyberspace.

INFORMATION ASSURANCE

Our nation's security depends on protecting data and information systems, and securely communicating classified or sensitive information that is vital to military and intelligence activities. In conducting its information assurance mission, NSA is charged with protecting our most critical national security and telecommunications information and networks (national security systems) from daily attempts at exploitation of these systems by our adversaries.

NSA is not the only department or agency charged with protecting U.S. Government data and information systems. NSA works with U.S. Cyber Command, the Department of Homeland Security, and other agencies, all of which have an information assurance role.

SIGNALS INTELLIGENCE

NSA conducts its foreign signals intelligence mission by targeting, collecting, processing and analyzing the communications of our adversaries in order to provide actionable intelligence to our customers and partners.

NSA's signals intelligence products inform decision making by national leaders, support military operations, provide force protection to warfighters, and thwart terrorist attacks at home and abroad. Every signals intelligence product responds to a specific requirement, and our SIGINT activities are executed in strict compliance with the laws, regulations, and policies that govern those operations.

INNOVATIVE RESEARCH

NSA's Research Directorate is a robust "in-house" organization dedicated to advancing intelligence and information assurance through science. NSA is on the leading edge of research in multiple areas, including advanced telecommunications, quantum computing, and nanotechnology, enabling NSA and the U.S. to be at the forefront of technical innovation. NSA also conducts a robust Technology Transfer program, aimed at sharing some of the results of NSA's groundbreaking research in both the public and private sectors.

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